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ABSTRACT

White females and members of minority groups have historically been underrepresented in educational administration. This paper describes findings of a study that produced a demographic profile of school leaders in central Missouri. A survey of 117 school districts in central Missouri elicited a response rate of 100 percent. Findings indicate that in large districts, 65 percent of elementary-school principals were female. Of those women, one-third were black. No minority-group members were employed as school administrators in the rural districts, which also had a lower percentage of women administrators than did medium-sized and large districts. Large districts had the largest representation of minority-group members in administrative positions; however, none of the superintendencies were filled by minorities. It is recommended that educational administration departments work harder to recruit and persuade women and minority students to pursue study for the secondary principalship and superintendency. Campus outreach programs can increase the awareness of school board members about women's and minority-group members' skills, and courses and workshops can provide information on recruitment strategies and the barriers faced by women and minorities. Contains 10 references. (LMI)

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Women and Minority School Administrators in Central Missouri

Janice Carner Reynolds

There are not enough qualified women and minorities being encouraged to enter education administration according to the National LEADership Network (1993). The public school superintendency in the United States is an occupation dominated by white men. Fewer than six percent of K-12 superintendents are women, according to a survey conducted by Susan Chase and Colleen Bell (1994). Francis Roberts (1990) reports that only about 4 percent of the nation's 15,557 school superintendents are women. Schuster and Foote (1990) concur and state that women occupy 4 percent of the superintendencies, 23 percent of the assistant superintendencies, 12 percent of the secondary school principalships, and 29 percent of the elementary school principalships. What makes this particularly striking, assert Chase and Bell, is the fact that women comprise 70 percent of all teachers, the very group from which school administrators are drawn (1994).

Sakre Edson reports that White females and Blacks, whether male or female, are underrepresented in relation to their numbers in the population of the United States, according to information cited in her book, Pushing the Limits (1988). For those reasons the National LEADership Network recommends that institutions of higher education, school districts, and administrator organizations work together to examine the data, expand recruitment efforts, provide mentoring and other entry-level support to enhance advancement opportunities for aspiring qualified women and minority candidates.

A survey of 117 school districts was conducted in January 1994 to determine a demographic profile of school leaders in the Central Missouri region. Data from the study will hopefully be used to meet the professional and personal educational needs of the various gender and ethnic school leaders through outreach and extended campus programs. The major goal is to develop accessible programs of study for professional development and career advancement for aspiring and practicing school administrators.

The enrollment of the school districts surveyed ranged from 19 students (Pettis Co. R-I) to 36,000 (Kansas City Missouri School District). The response to the survey included 100% of the districts included in the 20-county catchment area of Central Missouri State University.

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The first table refers to the total number of administrators in the 20 county catchment area. This table is broken up by gender alone. Minority and non-minority administrators are calculated within these percentages.

Percentage of Males and Females in Administrative Positions

Central Missouri Catchment Area

Supt.		Asst. Supt.		H.S. Princ.		Jr. H. Princ.		Elem. Princ.	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
93%	7%	78%	22%	94%	6%	82%	18%	45%	55%

The districts were then broken down into three groups according to size to determine if different-sized districts had similar types of profiles. The Rural District which follows has a lower percentage of women than the medium-sized and large district. These findings appear to support the research reported by Sue Shepard of Southeast Missouri State University (1994) in her study of women administrators in rural Missouri. The findings were even more bleak in regard to the number of minority members occupying administrative positions. There was not one administrative position occupied by a Black American in the rural districts (Student enrollment under 1000) of Central Missouri.

Percentage of Males and Females in Administrative Positions

Rural Districts (Student enrollment under 1000)

Supt.		Asst. Supt.		H.S. Princ.		Jr. H. Princ.		Elem. Princ.	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
93%	7%	0	0	96%	4%	83%	17%	58%	42%

In the following graph which represents the medium-sized districts, it is evident that the males still outnumber females, however, the elementary principalship is somewhat more balanced.

Percentage of Males and Females in Administrative Positions

Medium Sized Districts (Student enrollment 1001 - 5000)

Supt.		Asst. Supt.		H.S. Princ.		Jr. H. Princ.		Elem. Princ.	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
93%	7%	74%	26%	97%	3%	86%	14%	53%	47%

The elementary principalship in the large district is occupied by significantly more females than males. It is also significant that almost one third of those females are Black. While men still outnumber women at the junior high and high school, it is apparent that a higher percentage of females occupies these positions in the large districts versus the medium and rural districts.

Percentage of Males and Females in Administrative Positions

Large Districts (Student over 7000)

Supt.		Asst. Supt.		H.S. Princ.		Jr. H. Princ.		Elem. Princ.	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
86%	14%	83%	17%	78%	22%	78%	22%	35%	65%

As noted earlier, the rural schools of Central Missouri have no minority members employed as school administrators. Following is a chart representing the medium-sized schools. While members of minorities fare somewhat better, the situation is still in need of growth and change.

Percentage of African American Males and Females in Administrative Positions

Medium Sized Districts (Student enrollment 1001 - 5000)

Supt.		Asst. Supt.		H.S. Princ.		Jr. H. Princ.		Elem. Princ.	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0	0	0	3%	6%	0	0	0	0	4%

Finally, upon examination of the large districts, it is evident that a larger minority representation exists. At the elementary level, it is seen a a third of the principals are of a minority status. Larger representation is also evident at the principalship levels. At the superintendency levels, however, it is apparent that the representation of minorities is not nearly equal to their numbers in the population of urban areas.

Percentage of African American Males and Females in Administrative Positions

Large Districts (Student enrollment over 7000)

Supt.		Asst. Supt.		H.S. Princ.		Jr. H. Princ.		Elem. Princ.	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0	0	8%	0	13%	17%	26%	13%	6%	31%

Hunter Moorman (1993) relates that "two basic issues emerge when examining the status of women and minorities as educational administrators. The first issue is that both of these groups

tend to be underrepresented and lack access to administration; and second, the training they traditionally receive fails to acknowledge that they bring with them a set of unique experiences (1993). What are these experiences that are reportedly unique to women and minorities in administrative positions. According to the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, some of those issues are a lack of role models, mentors, or sponsors; a lack of peer acceptance; the exclusion of women and minorities from informal networks and informational systems; subjection to subtle or overt acts of racism and sexism; subordinates challenging their authority; subjection to higher performance level requirements; and perceived performance weaknesses being associated with race or sex (1993).

What can professional educators do to enhance the opportunities for women and minorities that has not already been tried? Whitaker and Lane (1990) suggest in The School Administrator that female professors in education administration can be helpful in serving as mentors and role models to women who desire to enter education administration. Tallerico, Burstyn, and Poole (1993) further recommend that universities expand the conception of "preparation for administrators to include ongoing support and continued professional development activities for practicing administrators. They assert that such outreach programs can be critical to the retention of women and members of other underrepresented groups in the superintendency. Finally, they suggest that universities collaborate with interstate networks of administrators' organizations to provide targeted professional development and support activities for current women superintendents. Tallerico, et. al. (1993) also suggest that universities provide research and evaluation data on such networking and support activities.

It appears that education administration departments should work harder in recruiting and persuading women and minority students to pursue study in the secondary principalship and superintendency areas. Second, it is recommended that encouragement and support be given in order that women and minority candidates be more aggressive in pursuing and obtaining positions of leadership which are compatible with their talents and aptitude. Third, it is vital for school board members to be made aware of the viability of women's and minority's skills through outreach and extended campus programs so that they might be more inclined to hire them. Finally, courses, seminars or workshops should be offered which help in recruiting women and minorities and which address the unique problems faced by women and minorities.

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